

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF
THE MUSHROOM GROWERS'
ASSOCIATION

MGA

BULLETIN

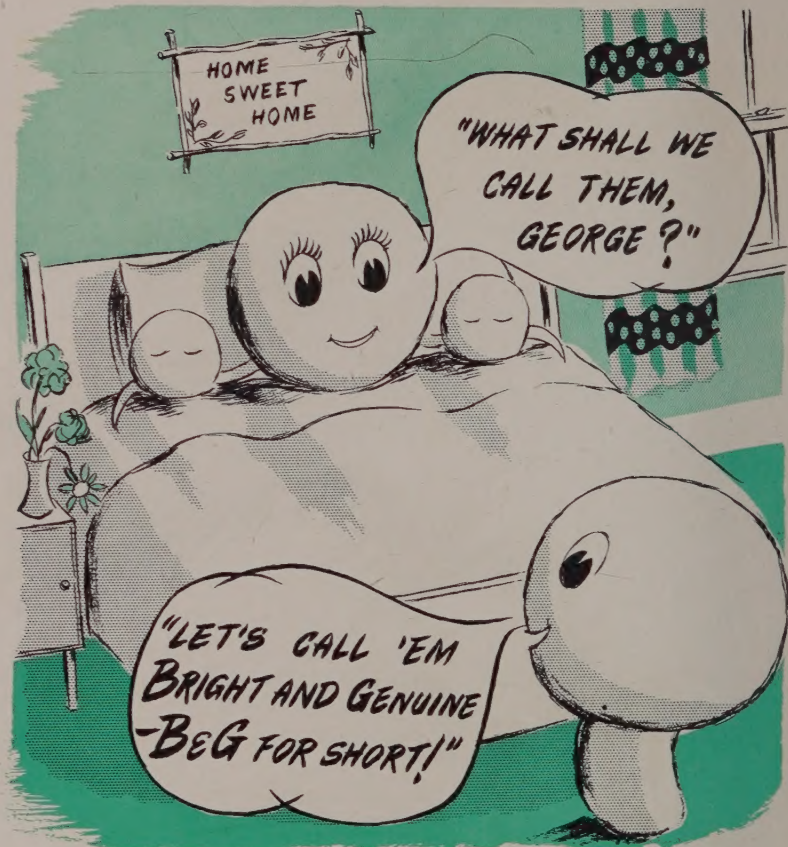
NOVEMBER, 1953 • NUMBER 47

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¼ " "	24/-	36/-
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7 lb. "	8/3d.	11/6d.



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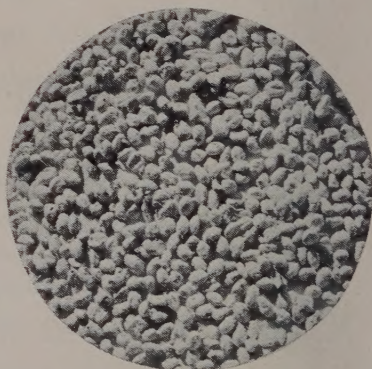
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EDITORIAL**Capt. G. P. Lawrence writes:**

Your Committee have done me the honour of electing me Chairman. I felt very diffident about accepting the nomination, but once having taken on the job, I shall do it to the best of my ability.

If any of you, which I can hardly suppose, think that I am a magician with something up my sleeve, you are, I am afraid, doomed to disappointment.

Any member of the Committee may have a brain wave, but we look, for inspiration, to the members.

Anyone who can grow mushrooms obviously has ideas. Well, let's have some of them.

Whilst I am in the position in which I find myself, I will do all I can to follow up any useful suggestion which any member may put up.

Manna from Heaven is not going to drop on our heads. It has got to come up from below.

Too often one hears the complaint "why don't 'THEY' do so and so"—Don't forget that you are one of 'THEY.'

Take for instance the A.G.M. and the Trade Show.

If it is held in the South you may hear someone say "Oh! the MGA is only for growers in the South."

If it is held in the North, the Southern grower may say "How do they expect me to get right up there."

They not only *may* say these things but they do. Understandable enough too!

Do members want the A.G.M. one day and the Trade Show the next? Or do they want the two days separated?

What time of year?

Should it be where good Hotel facilities exist and members' wives can get together and escape the eternal mushroom "shop"?

Opinions on such, and any other matter, will be welcomed, but please be a little constructive.

Mushroom growers are individualists and seldom all think alike.

It is not easy to put their wishes into effect without treading on somebody's toes.

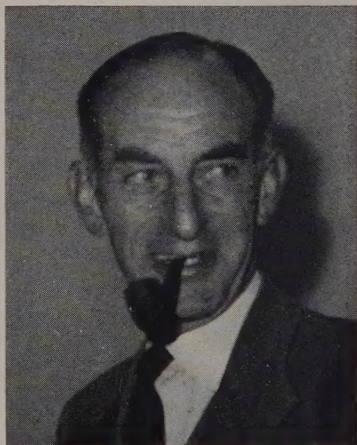
To misquote "You may please all the members some of the time; you may even please some of the members all the time; but you can't please all the members all the time."

Your Committee are aware of this—they are also aware of the fact that they were not elected to sit around and do nothing.

When I joined the Association I, like most others, I suppose, said “What am I going to get out of it?”

Well, I have got a lot out of it and continue to do so. The contacts which I have made with other growers are invaluable.

And now, having taken quite a lot out of it, I have the opportunity to put something back. And I very sincerely hope that, in a year's time, I shall be able to feel that I *have* put something back.



Captain G. P. Lawrence was in poultry farming for ten years till 1930, when he started trying to grow mushrooms. He says he has been trying to grow them ever since. He was commissioned in the Rifle Brigade in 1912, and served in India; served in the 1914-18 War in France, Egypt and Palestine; poultry farmed 1920-30 and was on the Executive Committee of co-operative Poultry Products Ltd. He has been growing mushrooms since 1930, and has been on the MGA Executive and the MRA Directorate since their inception.

Mr. G. W. Baker, the MGA's new Vice-Chairman, has been a Member of the Executive Committee for the past 3 years and, with Mr. Basil Harding and Mr. G. V. Allen, has arranged a number of successful Area Meetings in Kent, Surrey and East Sussex. He is a Director of Broadham Produce Co. Ltd., Oxted, Surrey. This Company has reconstructed and extended a farm purchased in 1946, which, when completed, will be one of the most up-to-date farms in the country. For the past 25 years he has been connected with the firm of Baker & Son (Oxted) Ltd., landscape gardeners and nurserymen, of which he is a Director.

THE HARBEN LEAFLETS

Last year we published the five short articles on "The Preparation of Mushrooms" written for us by the TV Cook, Philip Harben. These are now out of print, and we can only reprint if members let us know how many copies they would like at 1d. each. **Please let the Editor know within a few days** if you wish to order a quantity.

"I must say," writes Robert Patterson, "that we have found these leaflets very attractive for increasing our sales of mushrooms. We have had many cases of shopkeepers asking us for extra copies and I think this in itself is proof that they are popular with housewives."

RESEARCH APPEAL, 1953

The Directors of the Mushroom Research Association acknowledge with gratitude the following donations to the 1953 Fund:

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Agaric Ltd.	10	10	0	Brigadier H. S. J. Bourke	2	2	0
A. Beck (Bogota)	10	10	0	K. C. Bradley	2	0	0
R. H. Pinkerton Ltd. . . .	10	10	0	J. G. Stedall	2	0	0
Allsop & Allsop	10	0	0	Land Settlement Ass. Ltd.	1	1	0
Picardy Nurseries	10	0	0	Bankers' Orders (Sept.) . .	8	0	0
S. A. F. Sampson	10	0	0				
W. Knight & Sons Ltd. . . .	8	10	0		96	3	6
S. J. Pointing	5	5	0	B./fd.	1,115	12	9
A. Huggins (Andy's Candys Ltd.)	3	3	0				
R. A. Bacchi (Australia)	2	12	6	TOTAL	£1,211	16	3

LANSDOWNE NURSERIES WALK

As one of his last acts as MGA Chairman, Mr. Harold Boxall held a farm walk at Lansdowne Nurseries, near Worthing, on 1st September. About 40 local growers attended, mainly to see how he composted straw for mushroom growing.

Mr. Boxall explained the system from beginning to end and answered many questions. He uses MRA Activators and conforms very nearly to the system laid down by Dr. Edwards. He does not however wet his baies first but puts the dry straw through a chopper which throws the chopped straw into a heavy mist spray of water. The wetted straw is then left for a week to heat up and the activators are added in the normal way. "It's easier to handle dry baled straw than a wet bale weighing about three hundredweight," says Mr. Boxall.

The big shed is being converted into ten well-insulated units of 1,750 square feet each, all under one roof. The construction is of asbestos and glass wool. Two units are complete and filled, and two more nearly ready.

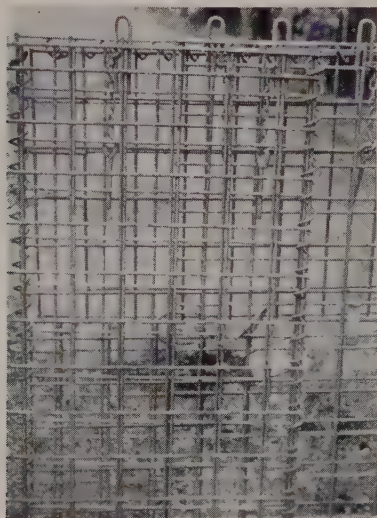
Members were loath to leave, and after a look around the glass-houses the last left as darkness fell, Mr. Frampton expressing a vote of thanks to Mr. Boxall.

PILFERING MADE DIFFICULT

The introduction, by the Eastern Region of British Railways, of all-steel mesh containers for the bulk transit of produce chips has met with marked success.

These containers, which have been in use for some time for the conveyance of mushrooms, particularly from Noble Mushrooms and Snowcap Mushrooms, of Yaxley, near Peterborough, were also extensively employed this season for the forwarding of soft fruit from centres throughout East Anglia.

No charge is made to growers for the use of the containers, and British Railways are anxious to encourage their use both to ensure speedier handling of produce, particularly where there is a break in journey from one train to another, and to guard against pilfering.



This shows how neatly the crates fold up—
a great saving in space when being returned
empty.

The mesh crates are of welded construction 26 ins. long, 24 ins. wide and 14 ins. deep. Each holds 32 chips of soft fruit, mushrooms or similar produce, and intermediate handling of the chips is entirely eliminated.

The new system is advantageous both to the grower and the salesman, as the produce is only handled on the field and upon arrival at actual destination and is, therefore, received in excellent condition. Spillage and damage to the fruit is avoided and speedier loading and unloading is achieved. Loaded, the crates weigh around 1 cwt.

The N.F.U. has welcomed the scheme and is understood to have asked for its extension. It is at present confined to the Eastern

Region, and growers interested in this new facility can obtain full details from the District Commercial Officers of the British Railways.



A close-up view of a crate packed with individual eggs.



Filled crates being loaded on to a train at Yaxley Station.
The contents of the crates are not touched until the crates arrive at the markets.

HARROGATE REFLECTIONS

The Harrogate Occasion has come and gone. The Chairman's Reception was the success it always is. The Mushroom Lunch was the best attended ever. The Annual Meeting was the best we have had, in numbers and probably in importance. The Civic Reception was a welcome and enjoyable interval in a strenuous programme.

The Mushroom Industry Exhibition was the best looking and most interesting we have staged—but the attendance, at any rate in the afternoon, was very poor, and it will be some years before the Executive Committee will dare to repeat this admittedly-bold experiment.

This is all the more regrettable because of the admirable arrangements which the Harrogate authorities made for us. The Mayor himself, and his lady, were kindness itself, and their real friendliness was so much in harmony with the feelings in all our hearts during those two days that a special Thank You is their due. We particularly appreciated the Mayor's interest in dropping in on us during the afternoon of the Exhibition to express his concern at the disappointing attendance and to offer helpful suggestions for a future occasion.

We were also tremendously indebted to Mr. Bill Baxter, Conference Manager at the Royal Hall, and his assistant Mr. Bryant, for all they did. Their efficiency is a by-word in Harrogate, but the easy charm with which it was exercised was agreeably astonishing to us amateurs.

Finally, a word about the Hotel Majestic. Mr. Addey-Jibb provided us with not only the best-cooked and best-served Luncheon of our nine-years career, but all his staff were most attentive and friendly, and it seems inconceivable that a better H.Q. exists in this country.

FRED. C. ATKINS.



EIGHTH MUSHROOM LUNCH

"Enormously successful" aptly describes the several functions which took place at Harrogate on Tuesday, 29th September, 1953.

Immediately following the Reception, the Mushroom Lunch at the Hotel Majestic was enjoyed by 123 members and friends. Mr. Harold G. Boxall, Chairman of the MGA, presided, and among the guests were General Sir Oliver and Lady Leese; the Mayor and Mayoress of Harrogate, (Councillor and Mrs. Eric F. Oddy); Dr. R. L. Edwards, Director of Mushroom Research; Mr. John Goaman, of the Ministry of Agriculture; Mr. Ernest M. Milner, of the National Farmers' Union; Mr. J. R. Ashton, Vice-Chairman, MGA; and the Secretary-elect, Mr. W. R. Alderton, and Mrs. Alderton.



Left to right : GENERAL LEESE, SECRETARY ALDERTON and CHAIRMAN BOXALL.

Mr. Boxall welcomed all the company to Harrogate—the Worthing of the North—and “to the most successful luncheon we have had so far.” He referred amid much laughter to a note General Leese had passed along during the serving of the savoury: “Are these small mushrooms ones which have been grown in trays?” and to Mr. Middlebrook’s reply that “the evidence, on closer inspection, of fly infestation suggests they come from Worthing.”



THE MAYOR welcomes us to Harrogate.
On his right is MRS WINSTON ALDERTON.

The Mayor of Harrogate said he and his colleagues were happy that the MGA had chosen to come to Harrogate, “but, you know, we don’t have such a fly time here as you do in Worthing!” (Laughter). He wished the Conference every success.

General Sir Oliver Leese proposed a Toast to the MGA. He spoke of the Bulletin and its high reputation throughout the world, and suggested it was important that our country should keep the lead it now held. He looked back on the tremendous progress made by the MGA during the post-war years, to the

little group of Midland Growers, to Mr. Middlebrook who had done a very difficult and great job for the industry, to Major Whitaker whose health, unfortunately, prevented him from coming along, to Mr. Hughes and Mr. Sinfield. But the person of whom he wanted to talk particularly was Fred. Atkins (applause).

“ I think that we owe him—everybody in this industry—a great deal more than perhaps we realise until we think of all the things he has done,” he said. “ There must be few of us who have not seen that wonderful farm which he and Mr. Noble run, and walked round it and wondered why we ourselves cannot get that 7 lb. they inevitably get. Then there is the tremendous kindness which has been shown on that farm to visitors going round, and at all the meetings of the MGA and the MRA we have had down at Yaxley.” (Hear, hear).

Sir Oliver went on to speak of the great work Mr. Atkins had done as chairman of the MRA and the MGA. “ It is not only during these times of actual Chairmanship, but throughout,” he said. “ If anyone wants help or support, he has always been on the spot and ready to help us. In these present negotiations we are having with the Ministry and the Board of the new Research Station at Toddington, it is a great pleasure and honour to be working under the chairmanship of Mr. Atkins.

“ He is now leaving the Committee of the MGA which he has been on so long. In publicity and journalism alone, Fred. Atkins has done so much for the whole mushroom industry. Everything has gone out from him, and not only that, but the whole solidity behind the scenes has centred on him. He has laid firm and good foundations for the MGA, and my only sorrow is that every single grower is not a member, large and small; and I would add a plea for people not in to come in now, to help us realise a united front.” (Applause).

Sir Oliver concluded with a note of appreciation of Mr. Angus Watson's work for the Association: “ When I was Chairman he did an endless amount of work, and good things to help everybody through, and I would like to pay my tribute to him. He is with me now, and your loss is entirely my gain.” (Applause).

Mr. Boxall referred also to the work of Mr. Atkins. “ When Mr. Percy Anderson was ill we did not know which way to turn and to all intents and purposes it looked as though the MGA was on the rocks,” he said, “ but Fred. Atkins returned to Yaxley and has seen us through. Coming to this meeting I considered some sort of honour should be bestowed upon our friend and I called a special Executive meeting last night unknown to him. We decided to ask him to accept Life Membership of the MGA in recognition of the work he has done for us.” (Applause.)

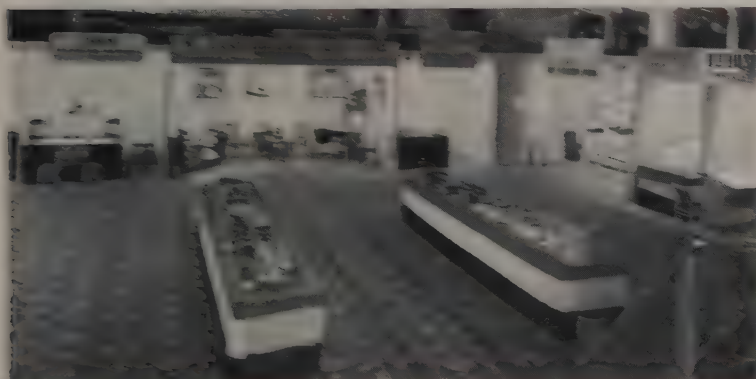
Mr. Atkins: “ I am quite overwhelmed. Nothing could make me prouder. I accept the honour you do me and thank you very much indeed. There is much consolation to me in the work of the MGA.



Angus Watson was an old friend of mine long before the MGA was thought of, and he served as such. Winston Alderton is also a friend of mine, of 20 years standing, and the knowledge that he is to carry on fills me with the keenest pleasure."

Mr. Boxall voiced the company's thoughts when he wished Mr. Alderton a speedy recovery to health.

Mr. Winston Alderton was called upon to speak and he said he hoped he would be able to come up to expectations. He seemed to have been picked up among them, but perhaps it was a good thing that he should meet so many members at once. "You have welcomed me very warmly," he added, "and I can hope that this time next year, when I have done some work for you, you will be as warm in your appreciation."



THE HARROGATE EXHIBITION

We are indebted to *The Observer* for much of the following report of the Second Mushroom Industry Exhibition, held on 10th September.

Wednesday's mushroom show was held in the Royal Hall, Harrogate. This is a feature, but the seats had been removed from the stalls and the stands of exhibitors ranged round the sides. There were further stands in an annexe and machines in an outer annexe.

The centre of the main hall was occupied by competition entries of mushroom packs. On the stage was a number of publicity ideas contributed by members.

Attendance at the show was very good in the morning, for many of those who went to Tuesday's annual meeting stayed over. The afternoon, however, was very quiet, and by seven o'clock all was over.

On the trade stands at the mushroom show there were several new ideas as well as old familiar friends.

The Murphy Chemical Co. Ltd. were showing their new Murphane dust, a wettable powder, and Dithio, a new smoke for controlling mushroom fly.

Pinkerton's Scottish Mushroom Laboratories distributed a new pest and disease chart prepared by the Pennsylvania State College School of Agriculture.

The Bradford Fertilizer Co. Ltd. is marketing a dried blood obtained by a new process. In order to get better spread and greater efficiency it is very finely ground.

J. E. R. Simons Ltd. of Harlow introduced their new Comporoto for manure turning and stacking, and a reversible chip cover which folds back to form a showcard and can be used to display a specimen mushroom.

Darlington's exhibit centred round their new grain spawn, which has only been on the market for three weeks. The "Evans" mist sprayer is said to be a great improvement on the older types.

Geo. Monro Ltd., Waltham Cross, showed a wide range including sphagnum peat for casing soil.

The Atlas Basket Co. Ltd. had a new 12 lb. shallow chip. Its length is twice the width plus handle. It thus stacks readily and is suitable for fruit, tomatoes and mushrooms.

Japa Paper Products Ltd. demonstrated the simple and quick stapling of their mushroom baskets.

F. Gough & Son Ltd. of Norwich, showed their usual range of cardboard boxes. They are arranging to install machinery to wax all interiors to prevent any chance of moisture absorption.

Oil-heated and solid-fuel boilers for steam sterilising were shown by **Perkins Clean Milk Equipment Ltd.** of Derby.

The Eclipse Peat Co. Ltd. of Bridgwater, showed three different grades of casing peat, one of them as fine as tea leaves.

E. O. Culverwell Ltd. of Lewes, demonstrated their full-size manure turners.

S. A. F. Sampson, of Oving, Chichester, displayed the Sinden grain spawn. This is made from whole grain cereal, is moist and ready for instant development.

H. D. Steele & Son Ltd., Worthing, displayed a new manure aerator for attachment to the larger Clifford Rototiller. This machine costs £46 10s. 0d. and seemed to be doing excellent work for the price.

Many people wondered how **D. C. Bushell & Co. (Eastern) Ltd.** the manure merchants, would fill their large space. Expectations of a heap of stable manure in the middle of the theatre were not fulfilled. Instead of displaying the end products of the horse, Bushell's modestly displayed end products of the end products—tomatoes, cucumbers and mushrooms.

On the stage were **Publicity Ideas** contributed by growers themselves; and it seemed to us that there was here enough material for first-class publicity that could be carried out by individual growers without waiting for thousands of pounds to be collected Glad as we are to see that the Mushroom Growers' Association is studying the possibilities of nation-wide publicity, we cannot help feeling that the efforts of individual growers, within their own circumstances, will contribute at least as much to the increased consumption of mushrooms.

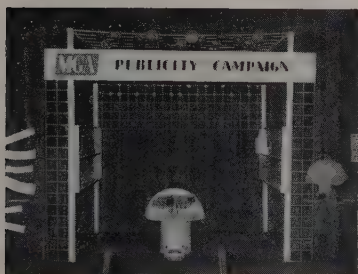
*We would add that **The Grower** staged a beautiful display of flowers to welcome visitors to the Exhibition.*

The Commercial Grower gave examples of the way in which it is catering for the needs of the mushroom grower, emphasising the regular articles written by Robert Patterson, a former member of the MGA Executive.

The scientific staff of the **Mushroom Research Association Ltd.** was in attendance to discuss with visitors the many problems associated with growers, particular emphasis being placed on substitutes for soil casing.

The MGA Stand was manned for the most part by our new Secretary, Winston Alderton, relieved during the day by most members of the Executive Committee.

MGA PUBLICITY STAND



This stand was organised by the re-formed Publicity Sub-Committee of the MGA, under the direction of its chairman, Mr. Raymond Thompson. It demonstrated publicity material of the past collected from several countries, and sought to stimulate publicity ideas for the future, leading to a nation wide campaign.

The stand itself was carefully constructed under the guidance of Mrs. Parsons, an Essex grower, to the most effective and artistic designs of Mr. Kenneth Wood. The display of the material available was largely the work of Mr. T. T. Leach, a Kent grower. On the clever mushroom-shaped table in the centre were displayed ideas for using the underside of the chip covers. This scheme, which had the approval

of all the chip manufacturers showing at the Exhibition, has already been most successfully used by Messrs. J. E. R. Simons Ltd.

In the decorative show cases on either side of the stand itself were displayed advertising material from Belgium and America. The former, represented by some amusing coloured postcards, used by a grower to advertise his product. The latter, by the magazine advertising of canners and soup manufacturers. The attractive mushroom decorations of Mr. Stanley Middlebrook's and Mr. J. Stewart-Wood's vehicles appeared under the heading "Paint your Wagon."

Mr. Kenneth Wood's attractive designs for the Restaurant "*Au Champignon*" and the mechanical mushroom, opening to show a gnome with a plate of mushrooms, were displayed with some fine photographs of mushrooms. Cuttings from English newspapers and periodicals were displayed under "These were fine publicity."

On the right of the stand itself were hung several posters used by individual growers in this country, with a short report noting the surprising success of one of them.

The all-important "DON'T PEEL" Stickers were attractively displayed, together with the Philip Harben leaflets which some growers enclose in the pack to good effect.

On the left of the stand was the Slogan Competition. Mr. Thompson had presented a magnum of vintage champagne for the best mushroom slogan suggested during the day. Many tentative slogans to give the competitors a lead, surrounded the poster announcing the competition, and many more slogan entries were received during the day. Alliteration was the order of the day, and it was appropriate that "**M-m-m Mushrooms**" won the M-m-m-Magnum of M-m-m-Moet et Chandon for Mr. M-m-m-Macgregor Bulloch. "*Mushrooms Make Meals Marvellous*," the joint effort of Messrs. Atkins and Leach, was second; "*Mushrooms—a Meal in a Million*," the work of Mr. Harold Boxall, third; and "*Make Mine Mushrooms*," entered by Mrs. D. M. Proctor, fourth.

The judges were Mr. A. S. Maney, printer of the MGA Bulletin; Councillor D. M. Christelow, Chairman of Harrogate's Publicity Committee; and Mr. W. W. Baxter, of the Royal Hall.

NEW (SEPTEMBER) MEMBERS

Broomhead, R., Beckwith Knowle Gardens, Otley Road, Harrogate, Yorks.
Culverwell, E. O. Ltd., Malling Works, Lewes, Sussex.
Edmunds, A. O., Tudor Cottage, Blewbury, Berks.
Ginderachter, F. Van, 40 Rue de la Stratégie, Auderghem, Bruxelles, Belgium.
Hartley, N., 85 Wembley Avenue, Lancing, Sussex.
Harvey, B. H., Principal, Essex Institute of Agriculture, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex.
Hild, Georges, Centrale Du Champignon, 45-50 Quai de Mariemont, Bruxelles, Belgium.
Lloyd, E., Kirkhamgate Nurseries, Batley Road, Kirkhamgate, Nr. Wakefield, Yorks.
Mortimer, R. A., Lees Hall Farm, Thornhill Leeds, Dewsbury, Yorks.
Rothwell, J. & Son, Little Hall Farm, Cottage Lane, Ormskirk, Lancs.
Smith, A., Vermont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire.
Stephens, S., 17 Eldred Avenue, Withdean, Brighton, Sussex.
Walsall Mushroom Co. Ltd., Longwood, Walsall, Staffs.
Wylie, R., Upfields, Nr. Tamworth, Staffs.

LIVELY ANNUAL MEETING

PUBLICITY—YES: ADVICE—NO!

The Eighth Annual General Meeting of the MGA was held at the Royal Hall, Harrogate, on Tuesday afternoon, 29th September, 1953, **Mr. Harold G. Boxall** (Chairman) presiding.

The Hon. Acting Secretary (**Mr. Fred. Atkins**) reported that, numerically, 1953 had been a good year; the total membership figure was now 542. Grower membership had increased by 10 and now stood at 338, its highest level ever. Honorary membership (which he felt was a misnomer; it ought to be changed to Associate Membership) fell from 218 to 204; but the one-guinea subscription had been doubled a year ago, and the income in this category had risen from 218 to 408 guineas.

"The monthly MGA Bulletin," he continued, "was only six months old at our last annual meeting. In the meantime it has settled down to a steady average of 36 pages per month and is a valuable and frequent reminder to us all that we are fellow members and that things are happening on other farms and in other growers' minds as exciting as any in our private imaginings.

"It is usual in these reports to mention the figures of attendance at meetings of your Executive Committee. These are as follows (out of six meetings): Nelson (Northern Ireland) nil; McArthur (Scotland) 2; Ashton, 3; Filmer and Middlebrook, 4; Boxall, Allen, Darlington and Lawrence, 5; Atkins, Baker, Bleazard, Luxmoore and Stewart-Wood, 6.

"The year 1953 will go down in mushroom history as the date of the Second International Conference on Mushroom Science, held in Belgium in June. We were the only organisation of growers in Europe not officially represented, and I beg and trust that that blot on our escutcheon will be erased when the Third International Conference meets in Paris in 1956."

The Statement of Accounts was presented. It showed an excess of income over expenditure of £20, and cash at the bank £407. (*See page 386.*)

The Secretary's Report and the Accounts were adopted on the proposition of Mr. Sam Nelson, seconded by Captain E. A. Gook.

On the proposition of Mr. F. Bleazard, seconded by Mr. W. A. B. Harding, it was unanimously agreed "that some record be put on the Minutes from this body showing our appreciation of the work Mr. F. C. Atkins has done in a secretarial capacity."

The Chairman said they were all sorry this year to lose Angus Watson who had been Secretary for so long; his outstanding personality would be missed at our meetings and at the office. Percy Anderson followed, but his tenure of office was cut short by illness, and Fred Atkins once again stepped into the breach and had done mountains of work to keep the MGA office functioning.

Winston Alderton now followed Anderson as Secretary; he was a most experienced journalist and his life-long interest in farming would stand him in good stead in his new sphere. In the new year he would add to the Secretaryship the duties of Managing Editor of the Bulletin, and all wished him every success.

Mr. Boxall went on: "Prices of our produce have continued to decline this season, reaching a post-war 'low' in July. The rising importation of mushrooms from Eire has worried and occupied the attention of your Executive this summer and the question has been raised at Headquarters. Although no longer within the Empire, Eire enjoys the same position as Commonwealth countries regarding Preferential duties and the whole of these agreements would have to be re-negotiated if any amendment was to be obtained. This would be very difficult to achieve for political reasons. In view of the enormity of the subject your Executive decided not to press for action at this stage. Your representative, Mr. Filmer, did however vigorously protest at the Glasshouse Committee meeting in London.

The Chairman then disclosed that the Executive Committee had decided that, with the present membership, clerical assistance could not be provided for the Secretary. This meant that, with the extra duties involved in the production of the Bulletin, there would be no time for the Secretary to deal with advisory questions, even if he were qualified to advise growers on cultural problems. Must they therefore discontinue the advisory service? Or should they make an all-out effort to increase membership and thereby income? Or had they reached a time when production had reached saturation point and should they stop encouraging new growers into the industry? Or should they embark upon a Publicity Campaign to increase sales and continue to expand the industry?

Mr. Stanley Middlebrook: Have we any alternative but to discontinue the Advisory Service? Is there anyone at the Yaxley office capable of giving advice now that Mr. Atkins is no longer there?

Mr. T. T. Leach: Can't our new Secretary get advice from the Research Station until he is able to answer questions on his own? I feel it is a frightfully important point. Members in difficulty want to write to somebody about it, and that is what they feel they are paying four guineas for.

Dr. R. L. Edwards: It must be made clear that membership of the MGA does not confer any claim whatever on the Research Station. We do our best to help when anyone approaches us directly, as quite a lot of non-subscribers do, but we do expect them to become subscribers because the Station depends on subscriptions. With all the goodwill in the world, the advisory problems of the MGA cannot be dealt with in that way.

Mr. Leach: I didn't know. Could it be made clear to possible new members that general problems can be dealt with by the MGA but that considerations of rather more technical problems would require a subscription to the MRA.

The Chairman: This is really a question of policy: Can we *afford* to continue to answer every question that comes to the MGA office, since it would require secretarial assistance. The NAAS was created for that very purpose, but the question is then raised: Is there anyone in the NAAS capable of doing that job? If you members consider we ought to continue our advisory service, your Executive will quite naturally have to consider ways and means of providing it.

Mr. J. R. Ashton: I think we should not give an advisory service. It is a very expensive business to do it properly. I want to know where you get the right man to give the advice, unless you use Mr. Atkins, and we cannot do that for ever, and we cannot rely on the MRA.

Captain G. P. Lawrence: Why did we ever give advice? I imagine it was because, when we started immediately after the war, there were a lot of prospective newcomers and we wanted membership, and we could not help but give them advice.

Mr. G. V. Allen: I do not consider the question of an advisory service to members or non-members as vital; is it? There are fifty other sources of advice—spawn makers, sundriesmen, NAAS, etc.—and they all give different advice. And we cannot afford to do it. Our new Secretary cannot do it off his own bat, and to refer all questions to those able to answer them would mean a lot more work for him. I don't see why he should do it (applause).

Mr. W. A. B. Harding: Our advisory service started off as mutual aid, and I would like to see it get back to mutual aid.

Mr. Middlebrook: That is a very important point. Advice was given initially to gain members, and members were wanted for protectionist reasons. At that time, mushroom growing was frowned on by the Government, and we were hit hard at every corner by this, that and the other Government Departments. We needed an organisation, and we had to offer some inducement to growers to join us in our fight. We got official recognition very soon, but we had to offer "mutual aid," which finished up by Mr. Atkins giving the whole industry advice in one form or another. At the moment we are not fighting the Government, but the existence of our Association is an insurance for the future; and you pay a jolly sight more than four guineas to insure your farm against fire.

Mr. R. Thompson: If you belong to a Trade Protection Society you do not expect to be advised how to start and how to run your business, do you? I think it would be expecting far too much for a four-guinea subscription.

Mr. Atkins: The problem may well solve itself. If somebody writes to Winston Alderton and says: "I am thinking of growing mushrooms; how do I set about it?" he will not be able to tell them.

Mr. F. I. R. Nevill: Surely we have got the brains within the Association to answer many of the questions members ask? Surely we can have a Brains Trust to which we can go and say: "We are in difficulties: can you help us?" I think, to pay four guineas and get nothing when one is in difficulties, is a waste of four guineas."

Captain Lawrence: The reason I joined the MGA was to get to know other growers. I wallowed in ignorance between the wars, but the moment this thing started I had the chance of getting at all sorts of people and I pester them now. I ask different people the same question and I get different answers, and if I go home and do the same as before, that's my funeral. By joining the Association, a member has the opportunity of meeting other members and learning something about it in that way. Who is going to answer questions for members? It means a lot of work. Our Secretary has not been a grower, and he has not got the time anyway.

Mr. Galbraith: I suggest we take a show of hands from members offering their services in an advisory capacity!

Mr. Allen: I was shaken by our friend who asked: "What am I getting for my four guineas if not advice?" I have had four guineas' worth of advice during the last 24 hours. That is the whole point: you do not get advice from one man, you meet 300 men and get 300 different views and sort them out. I get more advice by going round and meeting people and going to farms and seeing what is going on. And to say you don't get four guineas' worth out of the Bulletin every year is outrageous; I would pay 10 guineas for it.

Mr. R. G. Nelson: I think we should have a closed shop, raise our fee, and confine the advisory service to present members.

Mr. Middlebrook: One objection to the closed shop idea is that we would not be representative of the industry.

Mr. Leach: I propose we give prospective members concrete ideas as to what exactly he would get out of the MGA, with particular emphasis on advice from other members if they ring up or call and see them.

Mr. Atkins: I would hate to think that every member of the MGA was entitled to ring me up day or night to have his questions answered. I think an extension of the Area Meetings idea is the best way out. At the moment, members will get advice from Winston only if I answer the questions—and I am not going to do it any longer.

Mr. Thompson: Is there anyone available who commands a sufficient position in the industry for people to believe what he says? And how much would it cost to employ this chap?

The Chairman: I don't think anyone knows of anybody. Many of the questions coming into the MGA office are from people who want to come into the industry because they think there is a fortune in it. I think we ought to discourage expansion from the industry's point of view.

Mr. Atkins: Then we should point out to newcomers what they get for their four guineas, and tell them that for another guinea they can get advice from the MRA.

Mr. R. D. Dumbreck: The free advice I get from the spawn people is always first-class. I feel we should discontinue our advisory service.

Mr. Ashton proposed, Mr. Dumbreck seconded, and it was carried by a large majority, "*That the MGA does not provide an Advisory Service simply because it cannot afford to do so.*"

The Chairman: Have we reached a time when mushroom production has reached saturation point, and should we stop encouraging newcomers into the industry?

Mr. Ashton: I don't think the MGA has ever encouraged new members into the industry. What we should concentrate on is getting new members into the Association.

Mr. Atkins: I can assure you that the MGA has discouraged a great many more prospective growers than it has encouraged—not intentionally, but merely by telling them some of the facts of life.

Mr. Middlebrook: One of the things I suggest we can do in the future, since we have to stop giving advice on technical questions, is to engage in some form of publicity—not to increase the numbered growers but to increase the membership of existing growers, and to maintain present prices by a much greater consumption of mushrooms in the country.

Mr. Leach: I emphatically feel that a copy of the Bulletin should be sent to all growers who are not members. If they see something concrete, they might join.

Mr. Atkins: I recently sent round 2,500 leaflets explaining to non-member growers what the MGA was doing. We gained three new members as a result. A Bulletin might well be more successful.

The Chairman: Should we embark on a publicity campaign to increase our sales? A number of members have got new and bright ideas on this kind of publicity. An advertising campaign in the popular publications would cost us something like £7,500, which we cannot possibly consider.

Mr. Thompson: I know nothing about publicity. We shall have a small stand at the Exhibition tomorrow, and I hope we shall be given some good ideas on what we can do for publicity in the future. For instance, if we could levy a penny per pound on all mushrooms sold we would have, I suppose, something like £120,000 a year to spend on magnificent publicity. Unfortunately we simply haven't that amount of money, so we must try and get by on our very meagre resources. If we can get some money we can have a poster done professionally, incorporating a slogan, and if everyone connected with mushrooms would exhibit that poster the result would be pretty remarkable. It requires something in the nature of £125 to get a poster done professionally and to get enough copies to distribute to people who will display them.

The next thing I think is frightfully important is the question of people not peeling mushrooms they buy. The mushrooms served on toast at lunch had been peeled; bad show! It is a thing to put over. Six out of ten people peel their mushrooms and find it a bore. Recipe leaflets put in with the pack would also be a good thing. Lastly, a means of getting free publicity is to print slogans or other advertisement

material on the bottom of the chip covers. There you have got automatic distribution to the retailers of something like 125,000 pieces of advertising each week (applause).

Mr. Middlebrook: Does everybody agree that we need publicity? I would be willing to have the subscription raised to ten guineas to provide funds for some of this publicity.

Mr. Ashton: May I be rather rude and say, if anybody does not want publicity, he is in the wrong place—he ought to be in an asylum! I have had a little experience of trying to extract extra money from growers, and it is a very difficult business. There are people who pay all the time and who are always ready to help, but they are a minority. There is only one way, and that is through a Marketing Board. Under a marketing scheme growers could be compelled to pay a levy that could be used for publicity—among other purposes, of course. It could save the industry, and put it really on its feet. We could go the whole hog and have processing, canning, and all the rest.

A show of hands revealed that almost everyone present was in favour of some form of publicity for mushrooms.

Mr. Allen: There is a possible source of income. The spawn makers might contribute $\frac{1}{4}$ d. for every carton of spawn they sell. Can we approach them, and the wholesalers, basket makers, sundriesmen, and so on, to find out if they would come in on some such basis?

The Chairman: The question certainly arises, why should the grower foot the entire bill for publicity when all the other branches of the industry are involved? Why shouldn't the Wholesaler and the Retailer share in it?

Mr. J. E. R. Simons: When I suggested 12 months ago that members of the public ought to be invited to the Mushroom Exhibition I was told by one grower that the show was for mushroom growers only. The only refreshing thing about to-day is that, apparently, there are other growers who now realise that the only principle for success is you must sell your product. There are many inexpensive ways of endeavouring to create mushroom sales. I have carried out an experiment during the last year or so of inviting one or two retailers to come along and see how mushrooms are grown, and it is surprising, if a man knows something about the thing he is going to sell, how much greater an interest he takes in it.

Secondly, surely if every grower were to get a board painted and put up on his farm "Eat and Enjoy English Cultivated Mushrooms"—well, the 338 boards of our 338 grower-members would make a nice splash of advertising at little cost.

Mr. Guy Reed: Can this meeting decide whether the growers themselves would be willing to accept a levy, or whether they are merely thinking in terms of free publicity? If they were, our Publicity Committee might work out some scheme that would affect not only members but presumably all mushroom growers.

Mr. Nelson: I suggest this should be left over until we meet the spawn makers and see if such a scheme is possible.

Mr. Atkins: I don't see why we should pick on the spawn makers.

Mr. Ashton: If we think we are going to persuade the spawn makers to collect the money for us we are wrong, because they will not.

Dr. W. V. Peet: I suggest that our Secretary writes to the growers and the market salesmen stating our intentions to go on with publicity. I feel confident we will get the support of all the big organisations, particularly the market salesmen working on commission who obviously want more business at the higher prices. What we need is a bigger public and to make that point very clear.

The Chairman: There is another enormous section which would benefit—the retailers.

Dr. Peet: The retailer gets a small margin of profit out of mushrooms; in many instances he gets none whatever. It seems an anomaly, considering the price the grower gets, but I believe it is the fact.

Mr. A. S. Maney: If the Association were to design suitable publicity material—one member mentioned recipe leaflets, and attractive show-cards are another thing that springs to mind—you could have the best recipes and the best designs. These could be purchased from the Association by members who, I think, would get co-operation from his wholesaler in meeting the cost. These leaflets would reach the retailer with your mushrooms, and *you* would benefit from your efforts, not another grower who is selling in another area.

Dr. Edwards: I would like to add the suggestion that, in any such literature, you incorporate the MGA badge as a sign of quality. On another aspect, from our experience in the MRA, if you are going to hold up a publicity scheme until everybody who is going to benefit is also going to pay, you won't get a publicity scheme. If you are going to have such a scheme—short of a Marketing Board and compulsory levy, which I imagine many of you won't like—then some of you have got to be far-sighted enough to pay for it even though someone else will derive some benefit without paying (applause).

Mr. Sampson proposed, **Mr. Nelson** seconded, and it was agreed to leave the matter in the hands of the Publicity Committee.

Mr. Leach asked whether Dr. Edwards had had any reports from the experiment stations about used mushroom compost.

Dr. Edwards: Some of the experiment stations have either started or will start using spent mushroom compost for some crops. It is rather a slow process; in most cases it takes a year to get a result, and they like to complete it before they publish anything. When there are any results they will appear in the annual reports of the stations concerned.

Mr. Atkins: When Dr. Edwards obtains these reports I am sure he will pass them on to us, probably through the Bulletin.

Mr. Ashton: If members of the MGA would be prepared to supply the Ministry of Agriculture with details of their cropping space, on the twice-yearly returns, I think it would be a step in the right direction for official recognition of mushrooms. These returns have to be made

by all growers of every other commodity. Mushrooms are the only horticultural crop not included. It would tell us, at least, if not the Ministry of Agriculture, how many mushrooms are grown in this country.

As the meeting closed, Mr. Atkins expressed the MGA's thanks to the Chairman. "This has been the most difficult year any Chairman could have," he said, "and on behalf of all who now know what those difficulties were, I say Thank You for managing so well." (Applause.)

There being only five nominations for the five vacancies on the Executive Committee, the following were automatically elected: N. R. Cooper (Warcs.), W. A. B. Harding (Kent), A. G. Pointing (Wilts.), Raymond Thompson (Sussex) and Captain Giles Tweedie (Cumberland).

The following retiring Directors were re-elected to represent the MGA on the Board of the Mushroom Research Station: Fred. C. Atkins, its present Chairman; Captain G. P. Lawrence, its present Vice-Chairman; General Sir Oliver Leese, McG. Bulloch, M. C. Luxmoore, A. G. Pointing and J. Stewart-Wood.

Dr. R. L. Edwards and Mr. P. B. Flegg acted as tellers.

Important Official Statement

SUSPENSION OF THE ADVISORY SERVICE

By a large majority the members at the Harrogate Annual Meeting voted for the suspension of the Advisory Service. Not only was our new Secretary unqualified to answer cultural questions; his early assumption of the additional duty of producing the monthly Bulletin would mean he would have no time to spare for such correspondence. By payment of as little as a guinea p.a. members could seek the advice of the technical staff at the Yaxley Research Station, and there was always the NAAS and the advisory departments of the spawn makers, the insecticide and fungicide manufacturers, sundriesmen, etc.

This decision, however, has been misunderstood in some quarters. One of the primary duties of the MGA Secretary remains the advising of members on many problems other than cultural. We have in mind such questions as the availability of timber, the allocation of fuel, the licensing of new building, and the de-rating of mushroom houses.

With the passage of time the Secretary's knowledge of mushroom growing will develop and, though he will not be able to answer other than elementary queries, he will certainly be able to advise members where they are most likely to find the solution to their problems. As a professional journalist he will soon discover where the answers are to be found—if answers exist!

All the Harrogate decision implies is an acceptance of a fact: That an administrative secretary is not the person best qualified to resolve the many highly-technical *cultural* difficulties which continue to confound us who have been growing for years.



The Mushroom Competitions were judged by **Mr. John Goaman** senior horticultural marketing officer at the Ministry of Agriculture. **Mr. Angus Watson** acted as steward.

Broadham Produce Co. Ltd. (Messrs. A. D. Jones and G. W. Baker), of Oxted, Surrey, were remarkably successful, entering for five of the six classes and gaining five firsts. They carried off the MGA, Herbert Mount and John Thwaites Cups. The T. J. Poupart Cup was won for the second successive year by Elan Valley Products Ltd. (Col. W. N. Powell and Lt. Col. M. McLellan), of Llandrindod Wells. The winners were:

- Class 1. **The MGA Challenge Cup** (presented by Harding Bros. of Tenterden) open to members of the MGA only: three chips White Buttons, packed 3 lb. in a 4 lb. chip:—1. Broadham Produce Co. Ltd., Oxted: 2. R. J. Hopkins, Horam: 3. Noble Mushrooms Ltd., Yaxley.
- Class 2. **The Mount Cup** (presented by Mount & Son, Canterbury) open competition: one chip, White Buttons, 3 lb. in 4 lb. chip:—1. Broadham Produce Co. Ltd.: 2. Noble Mushrooms Ltd.: 3. T. T. Leach, Smarden, Kent.
- Class 3. **The John Thwaites Cup** (presented by the late John Thwaites) open competition: two chips, White Buttons (not less than 3 lb.) White Cups (not less than 2½ lb.) all as packed for market:—1. Broadham Produce Co. Ltd.: 2. Noble Mushrooms Ltd.: 3. T. T. Leach.
- Class 4. **The T. J. Poupart Cup** (presented by T. J. Poupart Ltd., Covent Garden) open competition: most attractive pack leading to advancement in consumer demand:—Elan Valley Products Ltd., Dol-Afallen, Llandrindod Wells, Radnorshire. There was only one award in this class.
- Class 5. One chip White Cups, packed 2½ lb.:—1. Broadham Produce Co. Ltd.: 2. T. T. Leach: 3. Snowcap Mushrooms Ltd., Yaxley.
- Class 6. One chip White Open, packed 2 lb. in 4 lb. chip:—1. Broadham Produce Ltd.: 2. T. T. Leach: 3. Snowcap Mushrooms Ltd.

At a very pleasant Civic Reception by the Mayor of Harrogate at the Lounge Hall the same evening, Mr. Goaman was asked to give his views on the entries. In view of the importance of the subject we quote him verbatim:



MR. JOHN GOAMAN

Several points stand out. The first is the extremely high level of the entries. Scores of 98 to 100 were awarded in several classes. One mark, and in some cases only half-marks, separated one prize winner from another.

Several of the competition winners were new to the competition, and from the scores awarded it may be inferred that they have little to learn about show packing. Nevertheless it may be of interest to explain some of the important things to aim at.

For example, it is important to catch the judge's eye, and attractive appearance and neatness in the packing and the method of packing is not only good on the show bench but also on the market.

The busy retailer likes to have something that shouts at him the moment he reaches the wholesaler's stand.

Full weight is extremely important, and it is good to be able to record that every competitor got full marks for weight right throughout the competition. Another thing is that not only should weight be there, but it should appear to be there. Some of the competitors lost marks because they chose too large a capacity for the quantity of mushrooms packed.

This has a psychological effect on business, also it is an encouragement to pilferers. A few mushrooms are not immediately missed from a package that already looks half empty, but if the package is really full even the loss of one mushroom is seen.

A reasonable degree of uniformity in size helps the appearance of a pack enormously, but with mushrooms close uniformity is bad because they have eventually to be sold by weight, and with a valuable product it is a matter of great moment to the retailer to weigh out exactly.



These are all points not directly related to quality of mushroom but where, as in this competition, practically all the exhibits were wonderfully good, it is attention to such points that puts one grower ahead of another.

The quality of the mushrooms was really excellent. Those from the South had a slight handicap over those grown nearer to Harrogate, since the southern exhibits inevitably showed some signs of the journey and the time it took.

Pest and disease were absent, but in a few chips there were some grains of what was probably casing soil. Certainly show bench mushrooms should never look as though they needed cleaning. The mushroom is one of the few vegetables the housewife should not be expected to wash.

Here is the score card for the winners in the main classes.

CLASS I

Com- petitor's No.	Appear- ance and correct- ness of pack (15)	Weight of contents (15)	Size and uniformity of size (15)	Trimming (Length and neatness) (10)	Colour and shape (10)	Matur- ity (15)	Condition (defects) (20)	Total (100)
1B	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	15	15	10	10	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	17	95
1A	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	15	15	10	10	14	17	94 $\frac{1}{2}$
1C	12	15	14	10	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	18	93

CLASS II

No.	(15)	(15)	(15)	(10)	(10)	(15)	(20)	(100)
2C	15	15	15	10	10	14	19	98
2F	13	15	15	10	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	14	17	94 $\frac{1}{2}$
2A	13	15	15	10	9	15	17	94

CLASS III

No.	(15)	(15)	(15)	(10)	(10)	(15)	(20)	(100)
3B	15	15	15	10	10	14	19	98
3D	14	15	15	10	9	15	19	97
3E	14	15	15	10	10	15	17	96

The Mayoress of Harrogate presented the trophies, and congratulated all winners on the very high standard of their entries.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Lawrence expressed the Association's thanks to the Mayoress for presenting the cups, and to the Mayor and Mayoress for their wonderful Reception.

At a subsequent meeting of the new Executive Committee, **Captain G. P. Lawrence** (Hants.) was unanimously elected **Chairman**, and **Mr. G. W. Baker** (Surrey) was unanimously elected **Vice-Chairman** for the ensuing year. **Mr. W. R. Alderton** was formally elected **Secretary** by a unanimous vote.

Opposite are the "clean sweepers"—Mr. & Mrs. A. D. Jones and Mr. & Mrs. G. W. Baker, of Oxted, Surrey; and on the preceding page is their entry which won the MGA Cup. Both photographs are reproduced with grateful acknowledgment to "The Grower."



The story is going round that certain parties who gained more than one cup at Harrogate filled the largest with a delectable liquor and passed it round. A candid observer noted one who drank so deeply that there was time to sketch him in the act. The illustration's appearance opposite a notorious Diary is purely fortuitous.—Editor.

PRESS CUTTINGS

Making regular **visits to the market** is of such great importance as to warrant the strongest stress Seeing the produce as it arrives at the market, seeing other growers' consignments, and observing at first hand the reactions of buyers, is all a part of the individual grower's business interest.

The B. & G. Review, Sept./Oct., 1953.

The effect of cheese-whey on potash deficient compost is only one of many striking revelations in last month's **Mushroom Growers' Association Bulletin**. The layman lucky enough to secure a copy can wander wide-eyed among the wonders of the mushroom-growing world—microbial proteins and mycelial growths, sphagnum peat, sporophores, spawn makers and lignin-tannin. Here at last is his introduction to Mitscherlich's principle and the vital Inverse Yield-Nitrogen Law, his first acquaintance with the hemicelluloses in liquorice roots, the insulating properties of exfoliated vermiculite, the twin deadliness of red spider wash and ethylene-bis-dithiocarbamate. Finally he can sit back and marvel how mushrooms used to manage in the old days.

Punch, 29.7.53.

MGA Library: We now have several books on mushroom growing published in the Polish language. They have been presented for the benefit of our Polish members by Ing. T. Bukowski, of the Laboratorium Mykologiczne C.N.O.S., Warszawa 27, Powazkowska 64. They include Bukowski's own *Uprawa Pieczarek*.

Dr. DILLON WESTON

I first met W. A. R. Dillon Weston at Cambridge in 1944, when I was studying the sporulation of *Verticillium* spp. on mushrooms. He was kindness personified, when I had expected cynicism at an amateur mycologist. It was he who sponsored my application for membership of the British Mycological Society, and I in turn persuaded him into membership of the MGA. The memory of his beautiful glass model of a *Verticillium* fills me with sadness at his untimely death.

F.C.A.

Stanley Middlebrook's Diary

Sept. 17. Is composting time really important? For years I've thought it was, especially with short composting and small triangles. We live but we don't learn, mainly I suppose because there's no one to teach us. Experience is no sure master. Recently we were two beds short and made them up with some compost from a stack of previous surpluses which had been lying out in a field for about eight weeks. At the first flush there was no difference between this old stuff and the properly timed compost. "Oh, well," we said, "it might do one flush but it's bound to peter out then." The crop is now nearly finished and throughout there has been no observable difference in quantity or quality. Maybe what is in a compost is more important than the time taken to "cure" it.

Sept. 18. Cure! What an unfortunate and silly word that is, to be sure. Prevention is better than cure. Why give a compost an anaerobic tummy then apply innumerable remedies to "cure" it?

Sept. 24. A grower who adds Gammexane to his compost used the spent material under a crop of potatoes. Some sacks sold locally were returned as the potatoes tasted of insecticides. It is strange that mushrooms, on to which Gammexane is frequently applied direct, have no such taste while Gammexane applied in a field is not dispersed in the soil but seemingly into the potato.

Oct. 1. A few comments on the Harrogate meetings and Show.

In his brief talk on his judging of the competition entries Mr. Goaman referred to the advantages of baskets being filled to the brim. It has a psychological effect on the purchaser, and it checks pilfering. But how does one manage to fill every basket just so?

During the same talk he also made the comment that Housewives are never going to wash mushrooms. Really? I should have said they are never *not* going to wash them.

One well known firm of growers—who, to spare their correspondence, shall be nameless—claim that their good crops and excellent quality are achieved by "over-creosoting the boards or trays then throwing away the first flush." Some people do like work!

A packet of Tide standing by the side of one of the large composting machines in the Annexe prompted the pertinent question from a lady "Is this a washing machine?"

The subject at our table at the Mayor's Reception was patience. The one lady present listened attentively while I explained that I took to mushroom growing because I have no patience whatever. "You see," I said, "we get quick results, no waiting. And moreover we get paid every week; if the cash isn't there on the day there's trouble." Quick result from the lady—"Sounds like us housewives," she said.

Rudely listening to the conversation at the next table I heard no good of myself: "Middlebrook has a disease so bad that he had to call in the vet."

Oct. 5. We couldn't show at Worthing last year because we had no good quality. We couldn't show at Harrogate this year for the same reason. Yet immediately after both occasions we suddenly produced a most remarkable quality and could by now give even Baker and Jones a good run. Throughout the year our quality is generally poor by show standards, hence our disapproval of grading. About four times a year we experience a few days of outstanding quality, then we drop back to normal. How we envy the Southerners who, despite their hot climate, can almost guarantee first quality every day. Indeed one Surrey grower complained that he couldn't grow small mushrooms and suggested crossing his breed with mine. The question of quality seems to baffle everyone. There **MUST** be an explanation.

Oct. 6. Quite a few people are complaining about mycogone in peat casing, mainly apparently in the sedge types. We have bubble in sedge and sphagnum. How much is a hangover from soil, how much comes in from the air, or how much is brought in with the peat no one knows. We shall be told, of course, that it can't be in the peat, just as we are always assured that maggots cannot be in spawn, slate can't be in coal, heavy horse shoes in racing manure or toxic fungicides in the water.

Oct. 8. Only at this time of the year do I envy those people who have no trees round their farms. The number of leaves per sq. ft. on our yards present a challenge both to our sweeping staff and our production director. Normally I value trees for their aesthetic as well as their screening value.

Oct. 10. *THE GROWER*, I see, is to give us publicity on "publicity." It is going to show us how we can publicise mushrooms at little or no cost beyond the personal efforts of individual growers. One awful snag about all personal publicity is that one is also selling the other fellow's stuff. Middlebrook's Mushrooms are no better (probably worse!) than Smith's, Jones', Robinson's or Brown's. If I advertise my mushrooms I may sell some, but the public will soon discover that it doesn't care whether they're mine or S's, J's, R's, or B's. If every grower in the country does his bit, very good; but if only a few advertise (in whatever form) it's the old story of a few carrying the rest. Many growers forget their duties to their fellows. So I'm going to forget—but in a different way. I'm going to forget to pick up that Philip Harben (or any other) leaflet that I'm always dropping—accidentally—on tables and chairs in waiting rooms, trains, buses, restaurants, hotel lounges, offices and so on. The dustman's wife might like to read it.

Oct. 14. Talking of aesthetics leads me to remind you that mushroom growing is an art. I have always claimed that he who tries and so completely fails to achieve his object must be an artist. Confirmation of the theory is provided by the fact that quite a few mushroom growers are patrons or executants of the various Arts. I know at least four who try their skill with paints, two who are useful with pen and ink, and I hear of several with good round baritone voices. Instrumental music, too, has its ardent followers though fiddling is, I believe, on the wane.

R. L. McCHEANE, of New Zealand, writes :

I am only growing as a hobby, as yet—have picked just over 400 lb. of mushrooms, all of very nice quality ranging mostly between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $9\frac{1}{2}$ oz., and no sign of any diseases. Heating is by electric "Pyrotenax" cable, which gives excellent control. It costs on an average $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per unit for power in New Zealand. The casing soil mixture used with most success was one composed of a light clay loam about 55% and a well-decomposed peat. I used, all told, 14 different mixtures of casing soil, and my results were from a few oz. to 3 lb. sq. ft. in the case of the above-mentioned casing. Trays with an area of 4 sq. ft. were used, with from 3" to 4" depth of compost to the MRA synthetic formula. I had a lovely dose of *Chaetomium* at the start, due to too much heat at pasteurising (160° F.). The compost was *full of it*. I was prepared to discard the lot when at $7\frac{1}{2}$ weeks the first mushrooms appeared. The crop was slow, but gave a very constant supply for 16 weeks.

We had news recently of **Mr. I. W. Read**, who used to grow mushrooms at Hockley, Essex. On the sudden death of his wife he retired at the age of 82 and went to Sydney, Australia, growing and exhibiting orchids as a hobby. Now, aged 86, he is busy collecting the premier awards for his exhibits. Recently, to the amazement of all, he won the championship for Cymibidiums against all professional and amateur growers in the country. He tied on points with the foremost Australian grower—a man who had many times the quantity of plants to pick from.

MORE ABOUT EELWORMS

A note in the 1952 *Annual Report of Rothamsted Experimental Station* adds to the complexity of eelworm identification. Two populations of eelworms, species *Ditylenchus desiructor*, were obtained, one from potatoes and the other from mushroom mycelium. These were introduced into 8" pots in which ten varieties of potatoes were grown. None of these varieties were attacked by eelworms from mushrooms, but all were attacked by the eelworms derived from potatoes.

The existence of separate biological races within a single species, identical in appearance but each adapted to feed on a different host, is not new. Such pests may even change their feeding habits under favourable conditions and acquire the ability to feed on new hosts.

In a similar experiment in Holland in 1951 Seinhorst and Bels found that eelworms of this species isolated from mushrooms or from potatoes would attack both hosts.

It was stated at the Second International Conference at Gembloux that some saprophytic eelworms, which do not feed on mushroom mycelium, nevertheless produce toxic substances in the compost and so poison the mushroom. This had been noted for a *Rhabditis* species by Sarazin.

It seems that the only safe eelworms in a mushroom bed are the ones which are not there!

R.L.E.

MGA STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS for the year ended 31st AUGUST, 1953

1952 £	Dr.	£ s. d.
628	To Salaries and Clerical Assistance ..	856 3 3
222	Postages, Printing and Stationery ..	260 4 10½
179	" Cost of Reprints and Advertisements ..	132 19 5
—	" Purchases of Literature ..	53 6 0½
5	" Subscriptions to Trade Journals ..	7 1 0
59	Telephone Telegrams and Sundry Expenses ..	63 12 5
90	Travelling, Hotel and Entertaining Expenses ..	151 4 0
14	Bank Charges and Cheque Books ..	12 11 10
14	Audit Fee ..	14 14 0
71	Rates and Insurance ..	3 4 6
—	Cost of Luncheon ..	121 18 5
—	Less Sale of Tickets ..	94 10 0
—	Cost of Quarterly Meetings ..	27 8 5
4	Maintenance Repairs ..	41 12 11
6	Other Expenses ..	6 0
—	Bad Debts written off ..	4 9 0
50	Reserve for Doubtful Debts ..	—
21	Schedule "A" ..	1 8 6
—	Depreciation ..	25 7 4
346	Balance—Excess of Income over Expenditure ..	1,655 13 6
£1,712		19 18 0½
£1,712		£1,675 11 6½

LIABILITIES

1952 £		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Subscriptions etc. paid in advance ..	8 18 7	
	Harrogate Show:		
	Amounts received for show stands in advance ..	210 0 0	
	Less Expenses to date ..	57 14 7	
23	Sundry Creditors ..	152 5 5	
160	National Farmers' Union ..	17 14 6	
	Income and Expenditure Account:	160 4 0	
	Surplus brought forward 1st Sept., 1952 ..	871 18 2½	
872	Add Excess of Income over Expenditure ..	19 18 0½	
		891 16 3	
£1,055		£1,230 18 9	

1952 £		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Cr. £ s. d.
	By Subscriptions from Ordinary Members 1952/53 ..	1,338 2 10		1,324
	Less Amount due to NFU ..	160 4 0		160
			1,177 18 10	1,164
	Subscriptions from Honorary Members 1952/53 ..	420 12 10		250
	Sale of Advertising Space in Bulletin, Sale of Bulletins, Literature and M.S.I.	1,685 18 11		1,419
	Add Stock of Saleable Literature 31st August, 1953 ..	100 0 0		200
			1,785 18 11	1,619
	Less Stock of Saleable Literature 1st September, 1952 ..	200 0 0		300
	Cost of Bulletins 1,513 2 10½		1,713 2 10½	1,139
			72 16 0½	1,439
	Sundry Receipts ..	4 3 10		118
£1,712		£1,675 11 6½		£1,712

ASSETS

1952 £		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	1952 £
	New Office as at 1st September, 1952	230 1 4		230
	Office Equipment as at 1st September, 1952			
	Additions at cost:—			
	Typewriter ..	192 8 6		
	Furniture ..	43 0 0		
	Scales ..	11 13 9		
	Shelves ..	3 6 9		
		3 4 6		
		253 13 6		
	Less Depreciation ..	25 7 4		
			228 6 2	193
	Library as at 1st September, 1952 ..		4 3 2	4
	Stock of Saleable Literature ..		100 0 0	200
	Cash at Bank ..		407 12 0	214
	Petty Cash in Hand ..		5 12 2	6
	Sundry Debtors ..	305 3 11		
	Less Reserve for Doubtful Debts ..	50 0 0		208
		255 3 11		
		£1,230 18 9		£1,055

We have examined the foregoing Accounts with the books and vouchers of the Association and certify the same to be correct and in accordance therewith.
STEVENSON, SMART & CO.
Auditors

My Favourite Recipes

8.—Miss Ingrid Ohman (Sweden)

Mushroom salad with shrimps

2 portions shrimps
1 " mushrooms in slices
1 " asparagus
1 " tomatoes in slices
1 " hard boiled eggs in slices
Lettuce in slices

sauce vinaigrette: 1 portion vinegar, 3 portions oil, clove of garlic finely chopped, salt and pepper to taste. All well mixed.

Place in a salad bowl mushrooms, shrimps, asparagus and tomatoes in order mentioned. Pour the sauce over and leave in a cool place for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Just before serving add eggs and lettuce and mix gently.

Veal or lamb au gratin (8-10 persons)

2 lb. veal or lamb, salt and pepper, fat
Gratin: 14 ozs. mushrooms
4 ozs. margarine
4 tablespoons flour
1 pint cream
salt, pepper
1 yolk of egg
1 white of egg
melted margarine
fine bread crumbs

Roast the meat and let it get cold.

Gratin: Clean the mushrooms and cut them in slices. Put in a saucepan with margarine and simmer till the fat looks clear (i.e., all the water is gone), but do not fry. Add flour, mix well and then add cream a little at a time, let boil for 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add yolk of egg while the stew or sauce is hot and let it get cold. It has to be rather thick. Add the hard beaten white of egg just before using stew.

Grease a fire proof dish and place in it slices of meat spread thickly with the gratin sauce. Remaining sauce is spread all over the meat. (It now looks like a loaf.) Put melted margarine over and sprinkle with bread crumbs. Brown in hot oven for about 20 minutes. Serve with gravy from the meat, vegetables and potatoes.

Mushroom toast

14 ozs. mushrooms in thin slices
6 ozs. margarine
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons flour
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 pints milk and or cream
salt and pepper, grated cheese, white bread

Put mushrooms and margarine in a saucepan and let simmer till the fat is clear. Add flour, milk and cream a little at a time. Season with salt and pepper to taste and let boil gently for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. When cold put a thick layer on slices of white bread, cover with grated cheese. Brown in hot oven for a few minutes, serve hot.

The stew can also be placed hot on toast. It can also be used as filling for omelettes and for *vol au vent*.

Mushroom puree (4 persons)

7 ozs. mushrooms
4 ozs. margarine
3 tablespoons flour
2 pts. broth (made on *poule au pot*)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. cream
salt and pepper
When serving: 1 yolk of egg, $1\frac{1}{2}$ gills cream

For this soup I prefer big and open mushrooms (second grade) or only the stalks and some button mushrooms for garnish. Chop finely or grind the mushrooms. Put in a saucepan margarine and mushrooms and let simmer till the fat is clear. Add flour, mix well and add the hot broth a little at a time and let it boil gently for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour or more. Rub through a sieve, return to saucepan and bring to boil, add cream, season with salt and pepper to taste, add the buttons which have simmered in a little butter. When serving add yolk of egg mixed with cream.

P.S. I always let the mushrooms boil or simmer for a very long time, I think I get most of the flavour that way. I often make the soup and the stews the day before.

Competition, home and foreign, is increasing, costs are rising, and the consumer has less money to spend What can be done to meet this situation? Two things. The first is a matter for the Government: regulation of imports, to the permanent benefit of producer and consumer alike. The second is a matter for the grower: increase in production efficiency. These two are complementary. In the long run neither can succeed without the other.

W. J. C. LAWRENCE in *The Grower*, 7.4.51.

FIRST GROWER TO BE A LIFE MEMBER



FRED. C. ATKINS was Honorary Secretary of the Midlands Group of Mushroom Growers which formed the Mushroom Growers' Association, was the MGA's Hon. Sec. for its first two years, and has served on the Executive Committee ever since. He was appointed Hon. Treasurer on the death of Percy Major. He was MGA Chairman in 1950-51. In 1950, 1952 and 1953 he was Chairman of the Mushroom Research Association Ltd., of which he has been a Director from the outset. For some years he has been Managing Editor of the MGA Bulletin. He was Chairman of the First International Conference on Mushroom Science at Peterborough in 1950, is now Chairman of the Permanent Committee, and was described at the Gembloux Conference as "the father of International Conferences." He is an Honorary Member of the French Growers' Federation and of Cerec, the Belgian Research Station. Among his writings are *Verticillium on Mushrooms*, *White Plaster Mould*, *Mushroom Composting Processes*, *Major Diseases and Competitors of the Cultivated White Mushroom*, and *Mushroom Growing To-day*. He is Technical Director of Noble Mushrooms Ltd., Yaxley, and a Director of Swanhill Nurseries Ltd., Wansford. Hobby: Mushrooms, at home and abroad.

Mushroom Growers meet at Harrogate

*Southern Grower takes the
Prizes*

HARROGATE, Wednesday.

The cream of Britain's cultivated mushrooms were on show at the Royal Hall here today when Mushroom Growers from all parts of the country and abroad gathered for their Annual Conference. This event, organised by the Mushroom Growers' Association, came to the North this year for the first time.

Despite local competition, many of the prizes went to Southern Growers. Most successful among the competitors were Messrs. Broadham Produce of Oxted, Surrey, who took five out of a possible six prizes for best quality cultivated mushrooms. A fine cup offered for the most attractive pack, was won by Messrs. Elan Valley Products of Rhayader, Wales, for the second year in succession.

Messrs. W. Darlington and Sons,
Ltd., of Worthing, Sussex, also
have reason to feel well pleased
since, all the six prize-winning
exhibits were grown from their
100 per cent. Spawn.

A civic reception was held in the Lounge Hall last night at which the main topic of conversation was, surprisingly enough—Mushrooms.

Quality AND Quantity

For
Heavier
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**100% PRODUCTIVE MUSHROOM SPAWN
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Manure for mushroom culture such as that from racing stables is frequently in too long and dry a condition. This can be considerably improved by using ADCO "M" with better crops as a result.

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FRESH LONG WHEAT STRAW **STABLE MANURE**

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**PURCHASE FROM A FIRM WITH A
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*Certified Weighbridge Ticket with each consignment or by load
Delivered by road or rail to any station or farm at reasonable
prices per ton*

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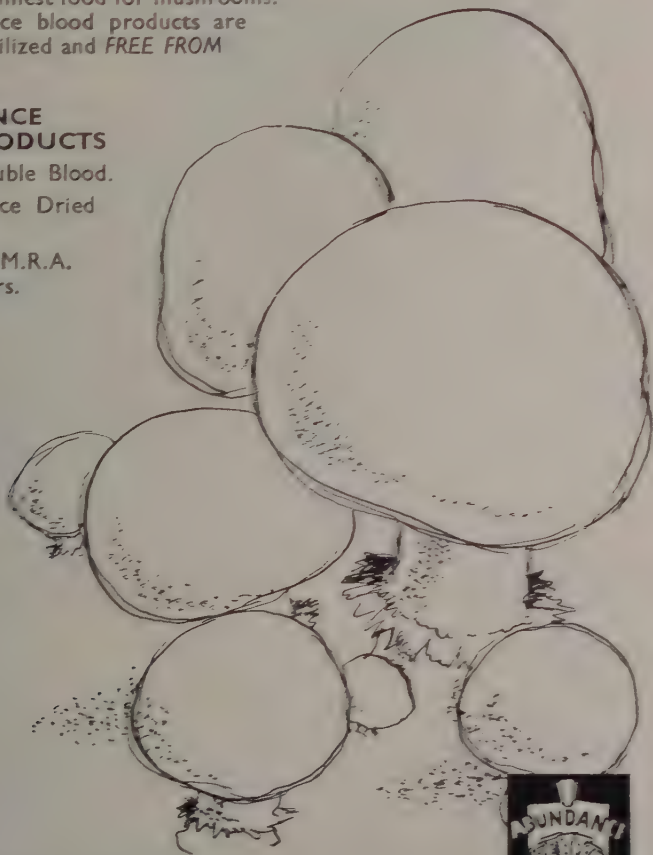
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99·9 Soluble Blood

They will "Spring up like mushrooms"—just as good mushrooms should, if you make your compost with Official M.R.A. Activators containing Abundance blood products which are nature's finest food for mushrooms. All Abundance blood products are certified sterilized and *FREE FROM DISEASE*.

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WIDTH: 18 ft.

LENGTH: In multiples of 10 ft.

HEIGHT: 6 ft. 6 ins. to 8 ft. at eaves.

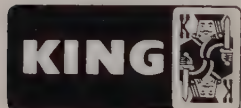
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INTRODUCTORY **OBSERVATIONS on our** **“386” Grain Spawn**



Tested for over two years by Mushroom Scientists under all varieties of conditions, “386” Spawn has behind it the full approval of notable authorities who co-operated during the research and development stages. These included experimental stations at home and abroad, research workers and well-known progressive growers who assisted me in securing this particular strain. “386” Spawn has been proved to be 10% to 15% more productive than any other Grain Spawn. It is a spawn with a safe moisture content, and gives a quicker mycelial run as well as earlier cropping.

In order that we may continue to serve our ever-increasing family of Mushroom Growers with the finest of products, our new spawn-plant has been designed and engineered throughout with meticulous care, to eliminate all chance of contamination. This new strain, and future improved strains, are well worth your consideration, resulting as they do from the kind of extensive research for which the sign of “386” products has become famous.

GREATER SERVICES

A most important addition to our staff is McGregor Bulloch. His service will be to direct research and keep abreast of advances in research elsewhere, acting as consultant to you, surveying your crops and helping to combat your troubles. Do not hesitate to write to him if you have any serious or minor troubles.



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HOSES. Haws water cans. Trigger lances complete with rose 35/6d. Special make. R. C. DARLINGTON, Hastingwood.

PEDIGREE GENUINE WHITE FINISH PAINT, in 5 gallon drums 54/6 per gallon. **PINK PRIMING,** very heavy, 5 gallon drums 51/6d. per gallon. **COOKSON & JOHNSON'S GENUINE ENGLISH WHITE LEAD,** in 5 gallon drums 57/6d. gallon, 100 gallon and over 55/- per gallon. Sample with pleasure, delivered 25 miles radius Hackney Warehouse. R. C. DARLINGTON, Hastingwood, Harlow, Essex. 'Phone: Potter Street 138.

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